



Developing Oral Language Skills in a Child

Language is more than talking....it is a tool that helps us think and learn. Children learn language through hearing it and using it. The more words a child hears in a day, the more words that child learns. The more words a child knows upon entering kindergarten, the better that child will do in school.

We learn language by using it, not just hearing it.

They won't say a word they have not heard.

They won't read a word they have not said.

They won't write a word they have not read.

Things to do to help your children learn language.

- Don't just talk at your children...they too must talk to learn the language.
- Give everything a name in your home. Say, "Go sit on the chair" instead of "Go sit."
- If your child points to an object he/she wants, say "Use words. What would you like to have?"
- Private speaking helps a child learn the meaning of words. Examples are: counting out-loud, repeating the directions when you are making food, saying the words as you are writing a shopping list.
- Ask your children questions that can't be answered with a simple yes/no or one word answer. Examples: "What would you like to do today?" Instead of "Do you want to go out?" "What would you like to play?" Instead of "Do you want to play?"
- When walking to the post office talk about what you are seeing or play I spy. Examples: "I see that your Auntie has gone to town because her four-wheeler is gone." Or, "I spy a blue house with a snow-machine out front." "I spy a big, brown dog with a black collar."
- If the weather is too poor to go outside, take a pretend trip with your children. Ask questions such as, "Where are we going?", "Who will we meet?", "Why are we going?"
- Take pictures on trips and place the pictures around your house with words learned. A trip to the post office, water plant, generator, or school for example would allow your child to learn many new words. You can follow up this trip with talking about the pictures and asking your child what he or she learned when visiting those places.